4.14 IMPACTS ON VISUAL RESOURCES

The visual impacts of the Proposed Action and its alternatives would result primarily from the addition of a large casino and hotel, or multiple casinos and hotels, and ancillary facilities to the existing visual environment. For this analysis, views from eight camera locations selected in Section 3.14 and shown in Figure 4.14-1 were evaluated for visual impacts. For each alternative, visual impacts were determined by considering the existing character of the landscape in view, the relationship of the site to the land around it, and the type of visual change that would occur in the view as a result of each of the alternatives. The before and after views of the alternative sites from the eight camera locations, or viewpoints, are depicted in Figures 4.14-2 through 4.14-23. The ROI for visual resources includes the character-defining features of the landscape that would be modified as a result of the Proposed Action and its alternatives.

4.14.1 Impacts on Viewsheds

A viewshed is composed of everything that can be seen from a fixed vantage point (or camera location) when looking in one direction. The visual impact assessment for the Broadwater site and Alternative 3 sites is based primarily on the review of computer-generated photo simulations of views from the eight camera locations. Simulations were prepared using Computer-Aided-Design-generated site plans and known vertical reference measurements. The simulations were superimposed on photographs of the various views affected by each of the alternatives. Photos were taken on low-humidity, high-visibility days. On most days, the humidity would be higher and the degree of visibility would be somewhat less than that depicted in the photos. Therefore, the simulations represent a high-visibility scenario; that is, objects are more visible in these photographs than they would be on a typical day in coastal Mississippi. The review of the simulations evaluates the effects of the Proposed Action and its alternatives on each of the views. Visual impacts are described in the following categories:

- No Visual Impact—occurs when an alternative would not be visible from a specific viewpoint, or when there is no change to the visual setting;

- Minor Visual Impact—occurs when an alternative would be visible as a background element of a view that includes, or would include, future buildings of similar mass and scale. The proposed project would not interfere with views from the specific viewpoint and would not change the existing viewshed character;

- Moderate Visual Impact—occurs when an alternative would be visible as part of a view that includes, or would include, future buildings of similar mass and scale and interferes with views from the specific viewpoint without changing the existing viewshed character; and

- Major Visual Impact—occurs when an alternative would be visible as a contrasting or dominant element, would interfere with views from the specific viewpoint, and would substantially change the existing viewshed character.

Alternatives 2, 4 and 5

The visual impacts associated with Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 at the Broadwater site are depicted in the photographs for camera locations 1 through 3. Camera location 1 provides a view of the beach with US 90 on the left and existing casinos visible in the background (see Figure 4.14-2). This photograph shows a view of the city of Biloxi as it is typically seen by motorists traveling into Biloxi from the west. This same view, with Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 superimposed, is shown in Figures 4.14-3 through 4.14-5. As the simulation in Figure 4.14-3 illustrates, the proximity, magnitude, and lack of screening associated with Alternative 2 would result in strong modifications to the view from this viewpoint. Therefore, the visual impacts of Alternative 2 as seen from the vicinity of camera location 1 would be major. Similarly, the high profile of Alternative 4 would result in a major visual impact from this location. Alternative 5 exhibits the same proximity and lack of screening, but the lower profile results in a lesser degree of modification to the existing landscape. Therefore, the visual impact of Alternative 5 from this viewpoint would be moderate.

Camera location 2 provides a view of the beach looking west from the Treasure Bay Casino to the Broadwater site and includes existing commercial development on the north side of US 90 (see Figure 4.14-6). This same view, with Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 superimposed, is shown in Figures 4.14-7 through 4.14-9. As the images of Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 indicate, each alternative hotel and casino development would dominate the view and significantly alter the existing viewshed. Therefore, any of the above alternatives would generate a major visual impact at camera location 2.

Camera location 3 illustrates the view to the west from the Beau Rivage marina. The visual character of this view is composed entirely of the view of the Gulf; the President Casino is not visible due to the distance of the casino from the camera location (see Figure 4.14-10). This same view, with Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 superimposed, is shown in Figure 4.14-11 through 4.14-13. During clear conditions, portions of Alternative 2, 4 or 5 might be visible from the Beau Rivage. However, due to the low visibility of any of these alternatives from this location, and the existing built environment associated with casino development, the visual impact on the viewshed would be minor.

For a discussion of visual impacts at Beauvoir and the Southern Memorial Park Cemetery, refer to Section 4.7.

Alternative 3

The visual impacts associated with Alternative 3 are depicted in the photographs for camera locations 4 through 7. Camera locations 4 and 5 provide views approaching Biloxi from the east on US 90 from Ocean Springs, Mississippi (see Figures 4.14-14 and 4.14-16). The US 90 approach offers many of the same viewing conditions as the I-110 bridge, while allowing views of the casinos on the gulf side of Biloxi in the far background. Future views from these two viewpoints as they would appear after the construction of Alternative 3 are shown in Figures 4.14-15 and 4.14-17. Although portions of Alternative 3, Sites A, B, and C, would be visible over the foreground trees and buildings, they would not be dominant visual elements as viewed

from these viewpoints because of the built character of the area, including the existing Isle of Capri, Casino Magic, Grand, Biloxi, New Palace, and Beau Rivage casinos. Therefore, the visual impacts as seen from camera locations 4 and 5 would be characterized as minor.

Camera location 6 illustrates the view from the mainland across Biloxi Bay (see Figure 4.14-18). As this image indicates, the visibility of existing high-rise casinos from this perspective is limited. As shown in Figure 4.14-19, Alternative 3, Sites A, B, C, D and E, would be visible across much of the horizon from the north side of the bay and would therefore be considered a major visual impact.

Camera locations 7 and 8 (Figures 4.14-20 and 4.14-22) provide views from the north side of the I-110 bridge and from the midway point of the bridge, respectively. These views are considered to be the most common views of the city of Biloxi and can be characterized as built, or urban-dominated, viewsheds. Future views from these two vantage points as they would appear after the construction of Alternative 3 are shown in Figures 4.14-21 and 4.14-23. In the event Alternative 3 is developed, Site F would be visible from camera location 7, and Sites A, C, D, E and F would be visible from camera location 8. The views would remain built or urban-dominated with a visible change in keeping with the current character. Therefore, the visual impacts from these viewpoints would be minor.

The computer-aided visual analysis demonstrates a negligible effect from Alternative 3 on the viewsheds in the Biloxi area. However, the distinctive presence of Biloxi's well-established commercial fishing industry is visually apparent in the form of boats and warehouses all along the waterfront. Continued casino development as described in Alternative 3 would most likely displace commercial boats and consequently further detract from the maritime appearance that remains an integral part of the way in which Biloxi is perceived by both residents and visitors.

For a discussion of visual impacts at the Old Brick House, refer to Section 4.7.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be developed at the Broadwater site. The site would remain in its current condition, with some redevelopment activity in the near-term, and its visual contribution to the broader viewshed would remain essentially unchanged during this period. However, casino development by proponents other than President Casinos, Inc. could occur at locations included in Alternative 3. The quality and character of such future development and its impact on surrounding views cannot be anticipated.

4.14.2 Impacts on Lighting

Increased levels of light would result from the development of the Proposed Action and its alternatives. However, the additional lighting would not contrast dramatically with the existing lighting at either the current Broadwater site or any of the other surrounding casinos along the gulf or the bay.

4.14.3 Mitigation

- Install high-quality directional light fixtures to illuminate signs and buildings while using landscape buffers and screening devices to minimize light spill into surrounding neighborhoods.
- Install screening, such as trees, along US 90 to minimize the view of Alternatives 2, 4 and 5 from US 90.
- Incorporate plantings or a mural into the design of Alternatives 2, 4, and 5 to improve the aesthetic character of the project from US 90.

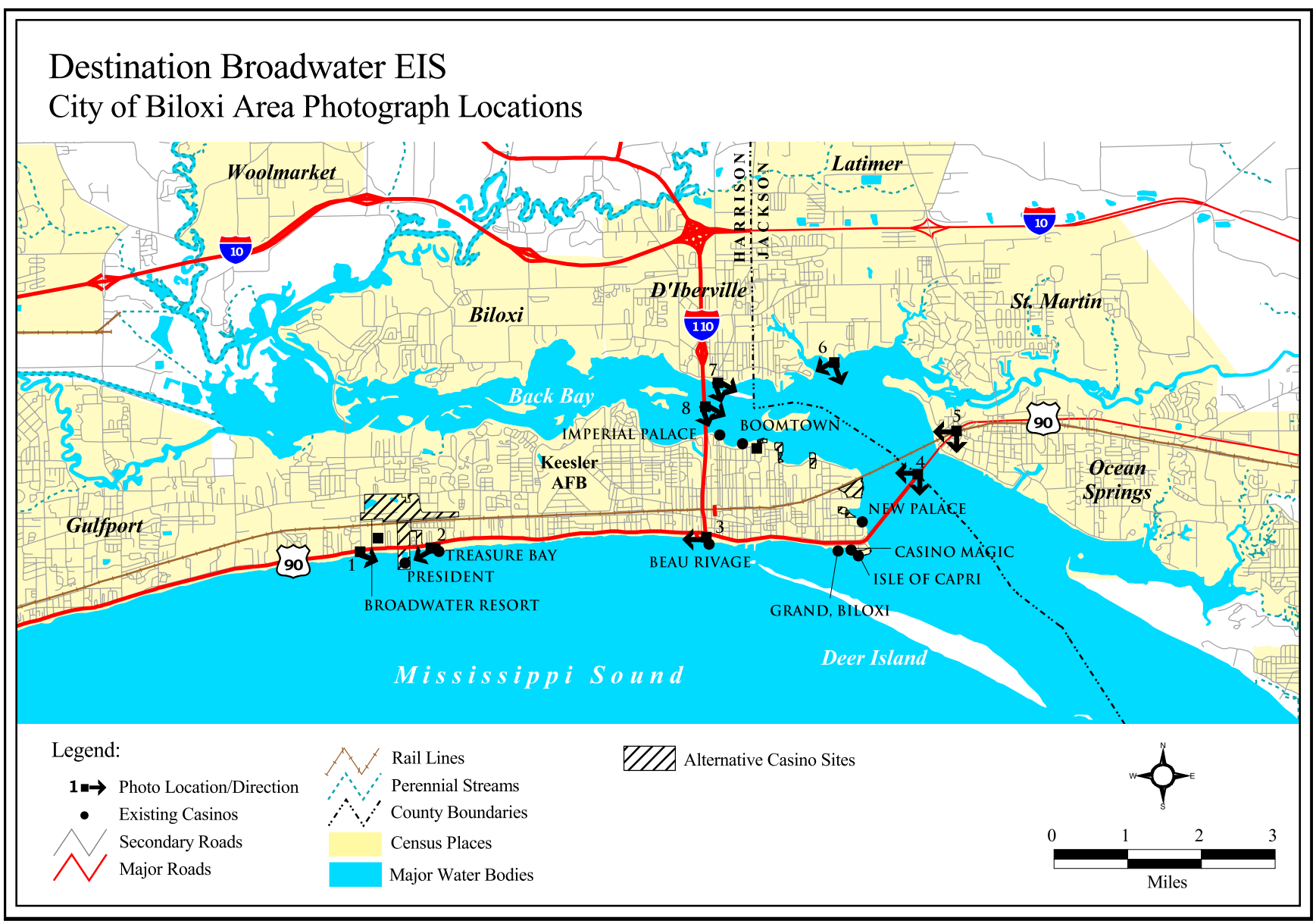

Figure 4.14-1: City of Biloxi area photograph locations

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 1 - Existing Conditions

Figure 4.14-2: Existing conditions looking east (refer to camera location 1 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 1 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 2 Site

Figure 4.14-3: Visual simulation of Alternative 2 looking east (refer to camera location 1 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 1 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 4 Site

Figure 4.14-4: Visual simulation of Alternative 4 looking east (refer to camera location 1 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 1 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 5 Site

Figure 4.14-5: Visual simulation of Alternative 5 looking east (refer to camera location 1 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 2 - Existing Conditions

Figure 4.14-6: Existing conditions looking west (refer to camera location 2 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 2 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 2 Site

Figure 4.14-7: Visual simulation of Alternative 2 looking west (refer to camera location 2 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 2 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 4 Site

Figure 4.14-8: Visual simulation of Alternative 4 looking west (refer to camera location 2 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 2 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 5 Site

Figure 4.14-9: Visual simulation of Alternative 5 looking west (refer to camera location 2 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 3 - Existing Conditions

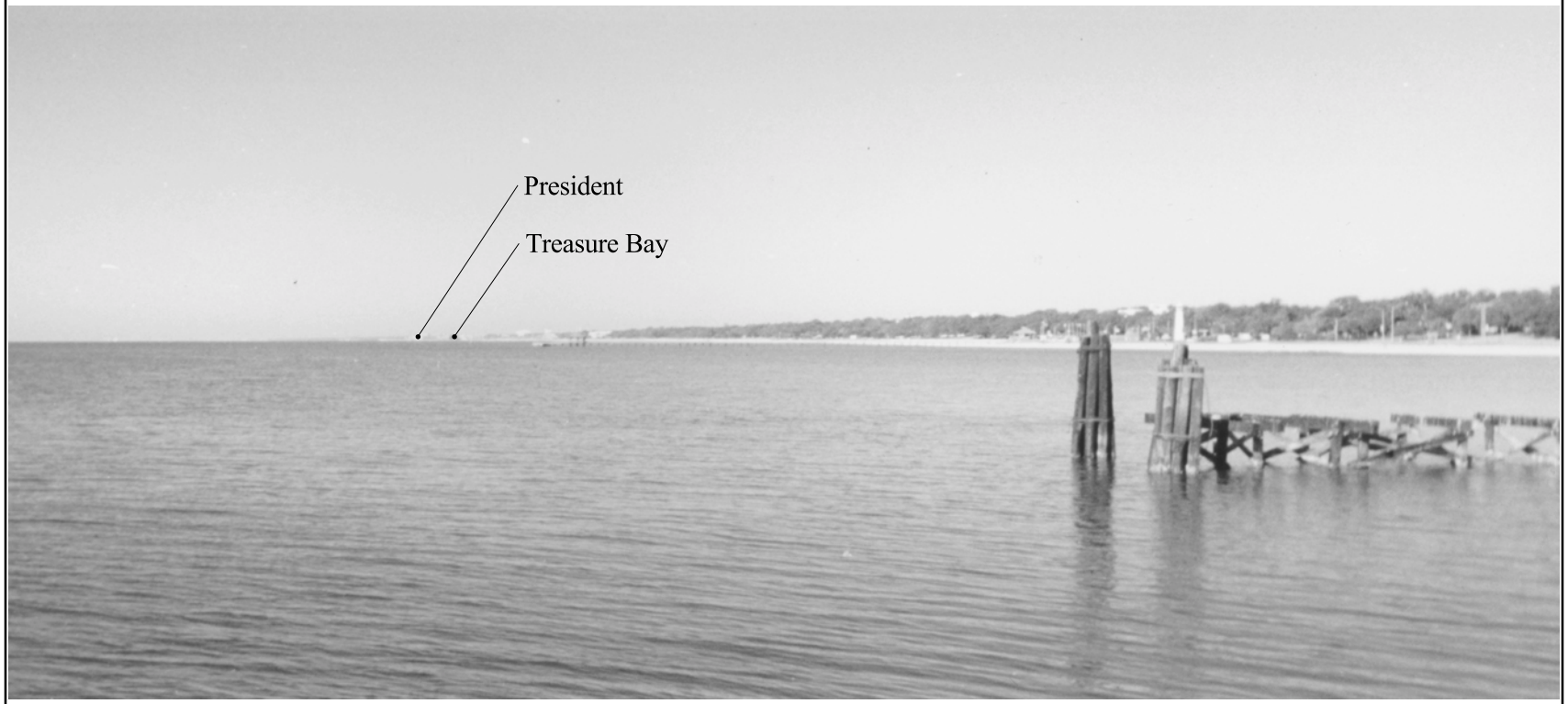

Figure 4.14-10: Existing conditions looking west (refer to camera location 3 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 3 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 2 Site

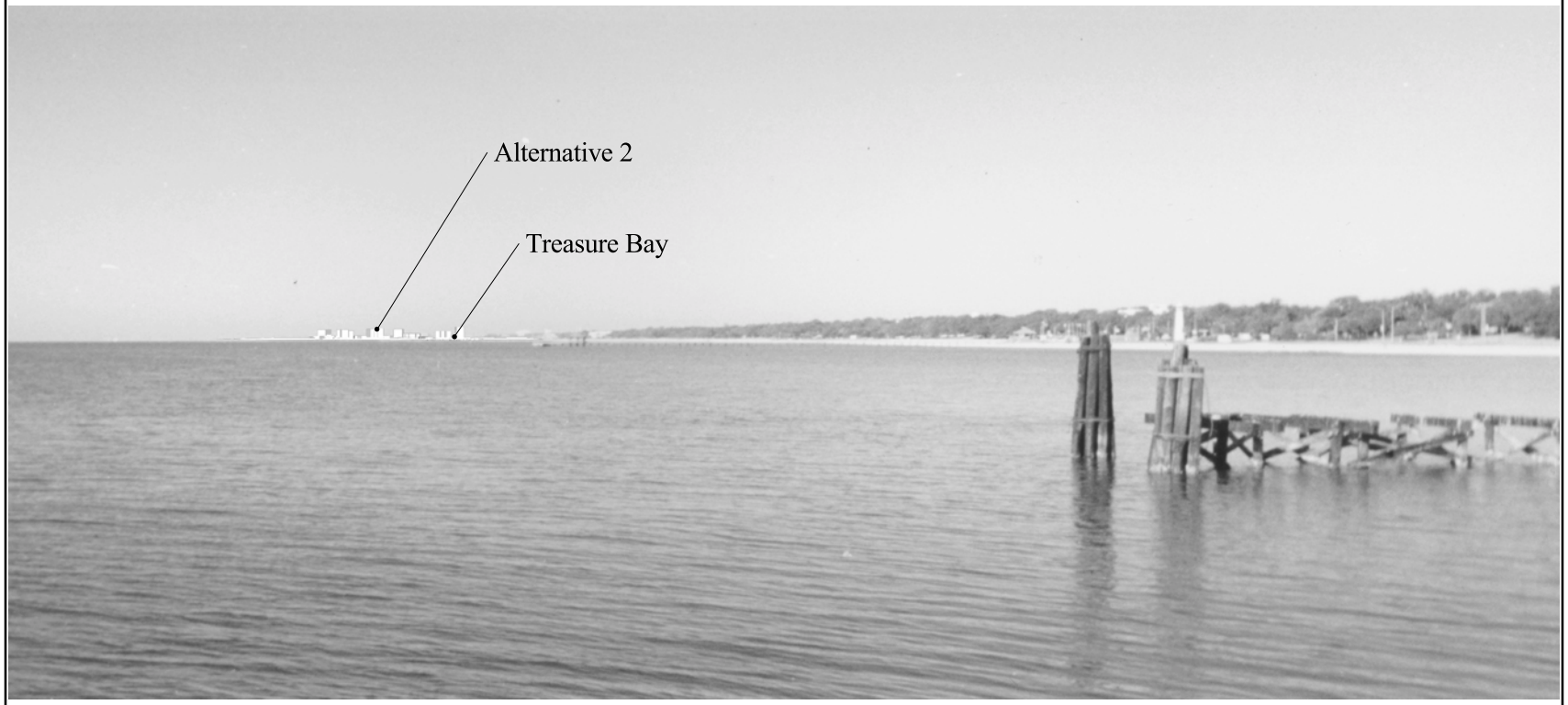

Figure 4.14-11: Visual simulation of Alternative 2 looking west (refer to camera location 3 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 3 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 4 Site

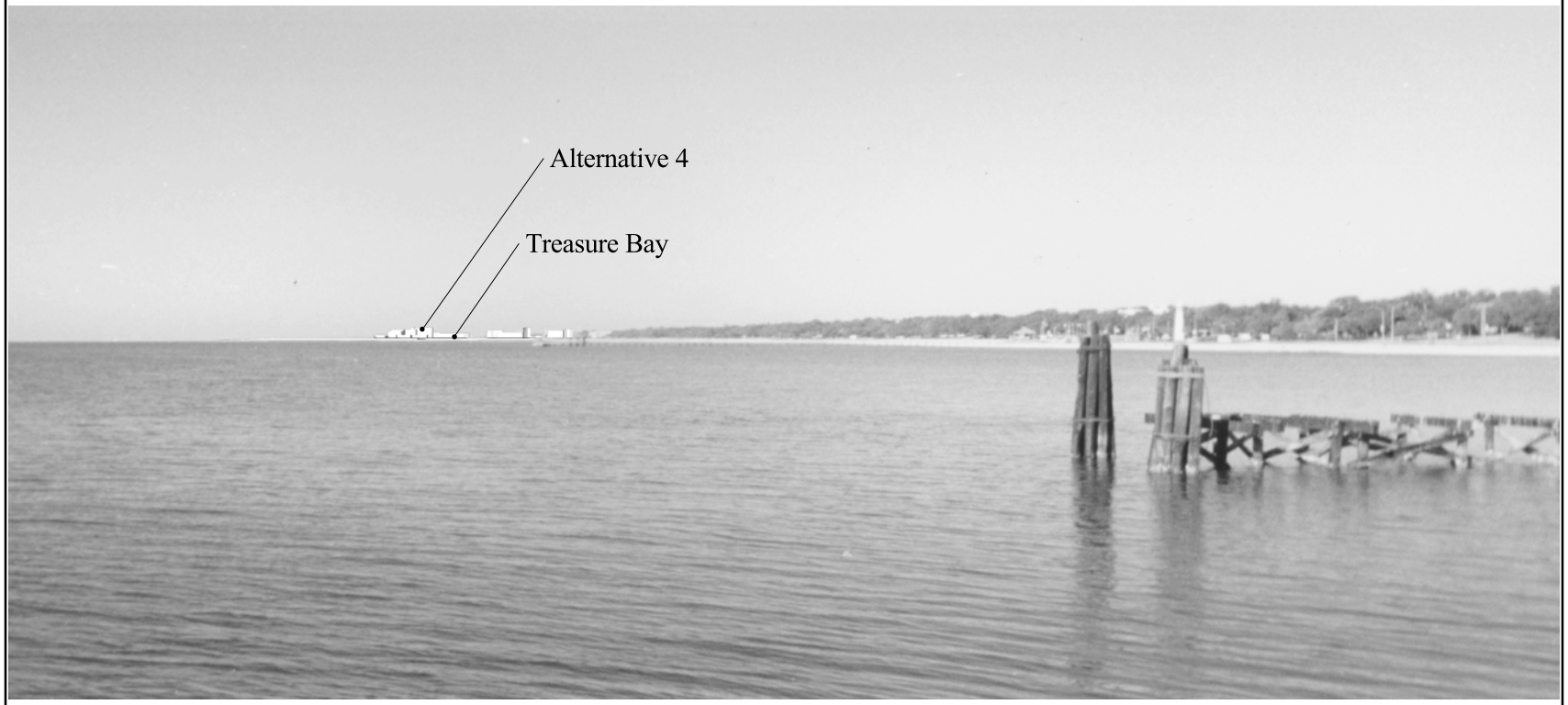

Figure 4.14-12: Visual simulation of Alternative 4 looking west (refer to camera location 3 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 3 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 5 Site

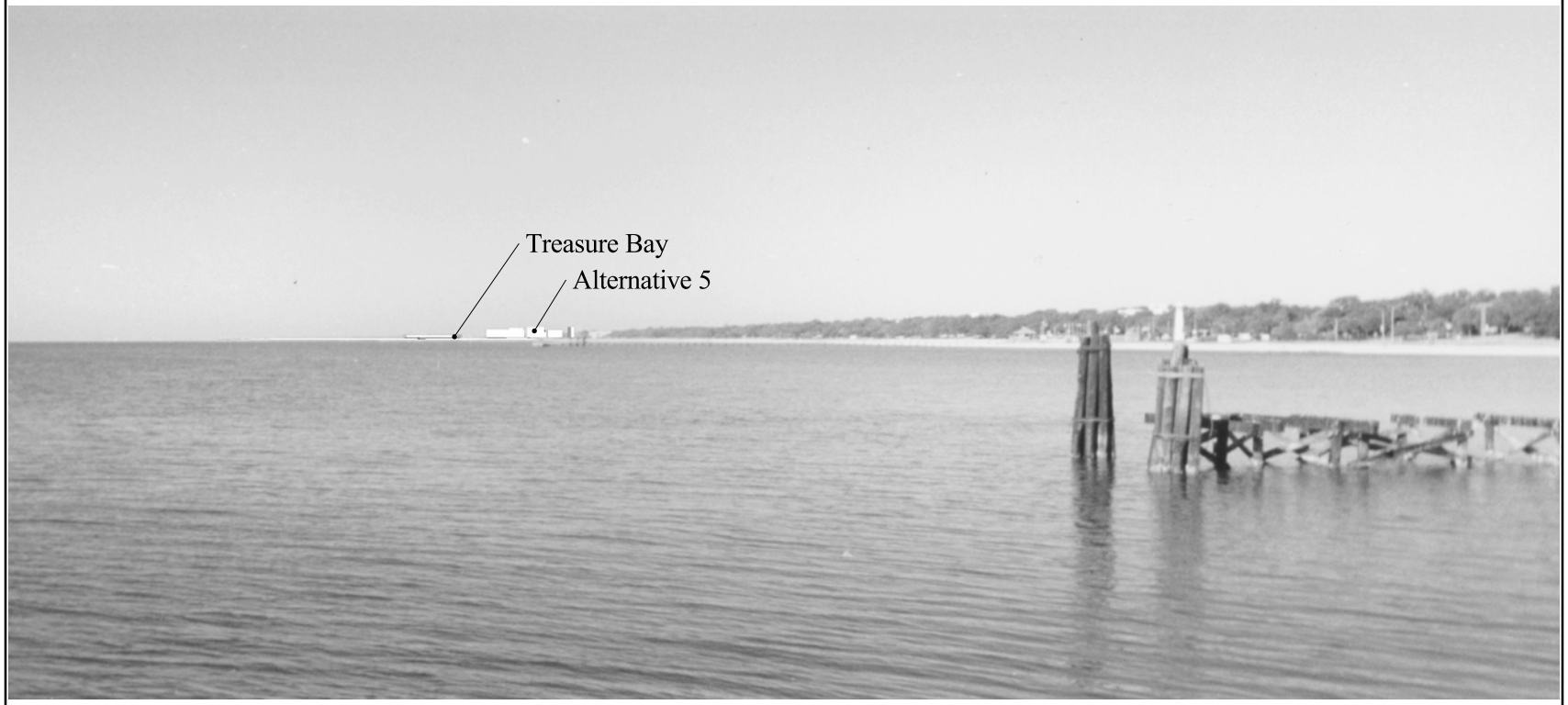

Figure 4.14-13: Visual simulation of Alternative 5 looking west (refer to camera location 3 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 4 - Existing Conditions

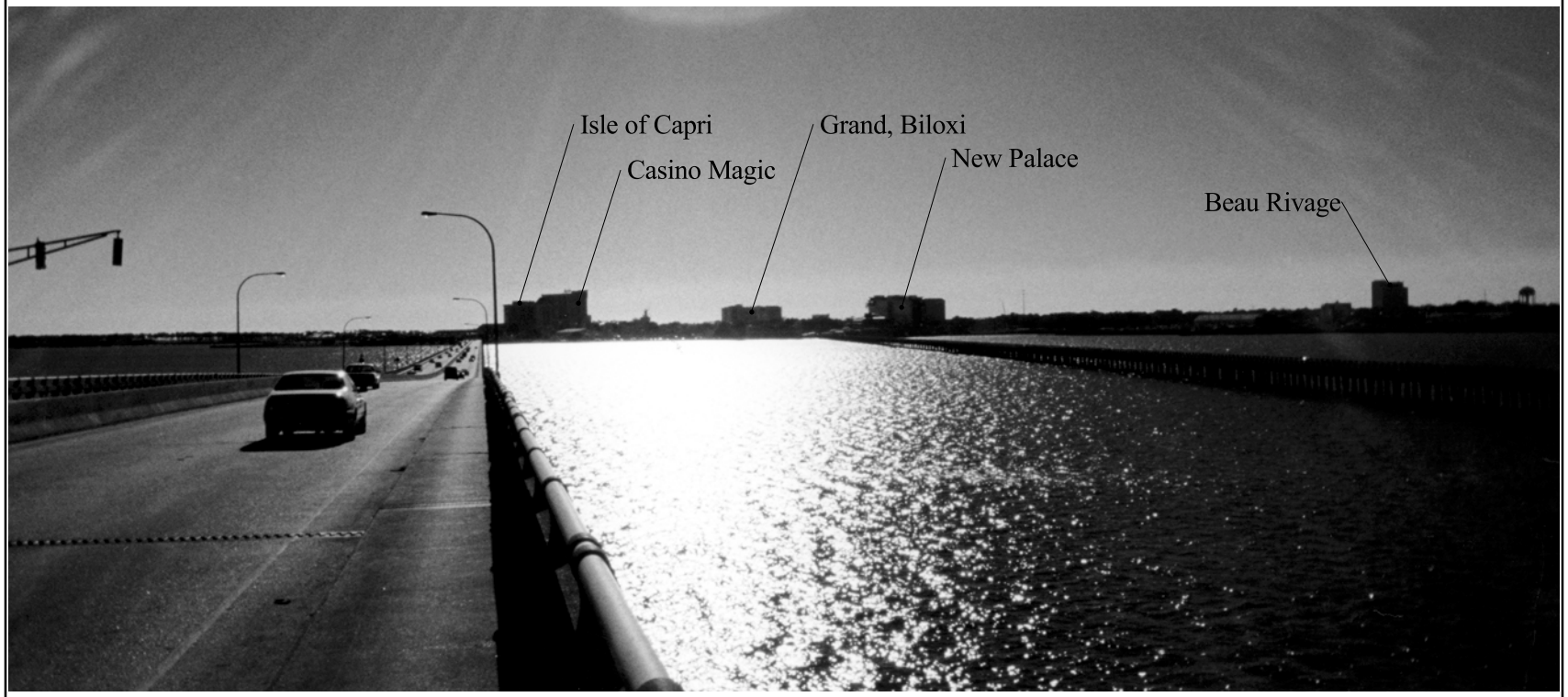

Figure 4.14-14: Existing conditions looking southwest (refer to camera location 4 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 4 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 3 Sites

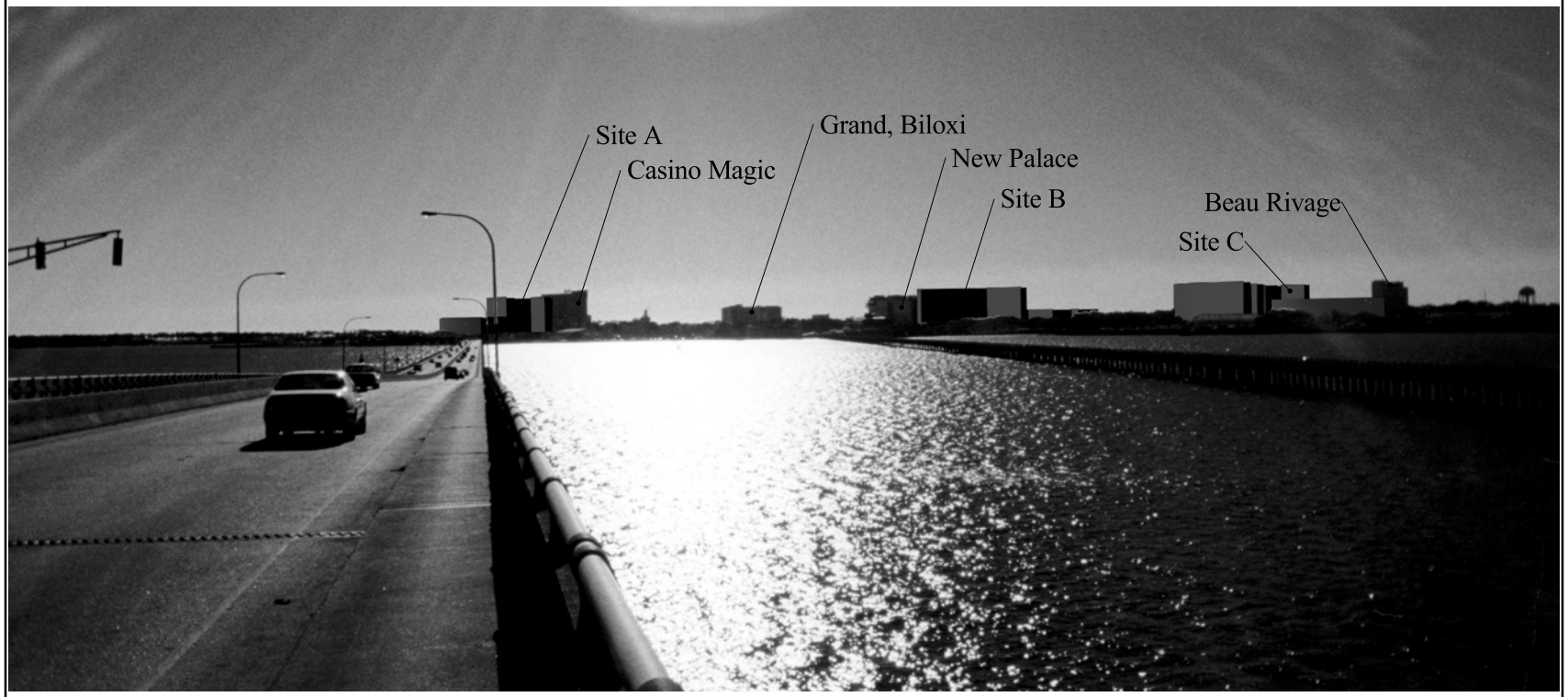

Figure 4.14-15: Visual simulation of Alternative 3 looking southwest (refer to camera location 4 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 5 - Existing Conditions

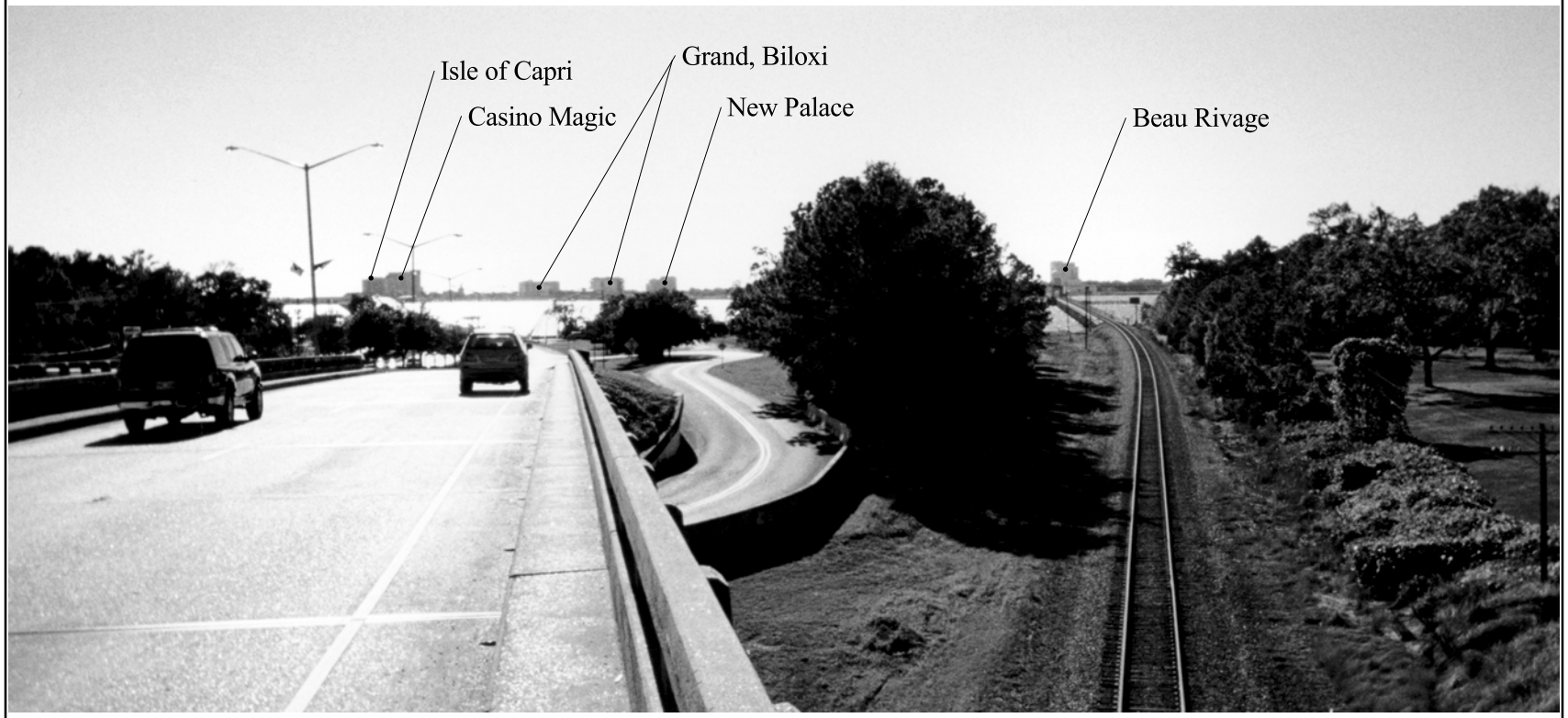

Figure 4.14-16: Existing conditions looking southwest (refer to camera location 5 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 5 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 3 Sites

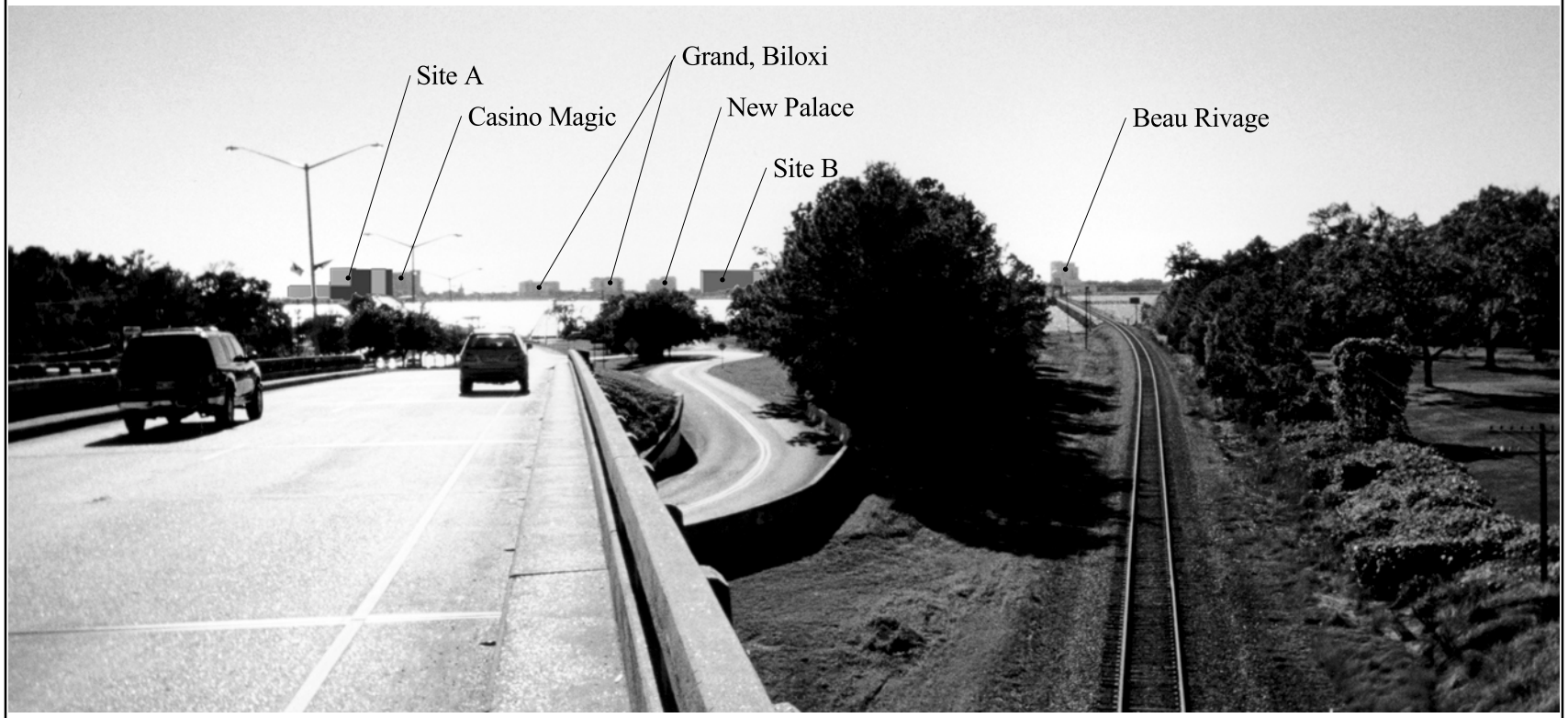

Figure 4.14-17: Visual simulation of Alternative 3 looking southwest (refer to camera location 5 on Figure 4.14-1)

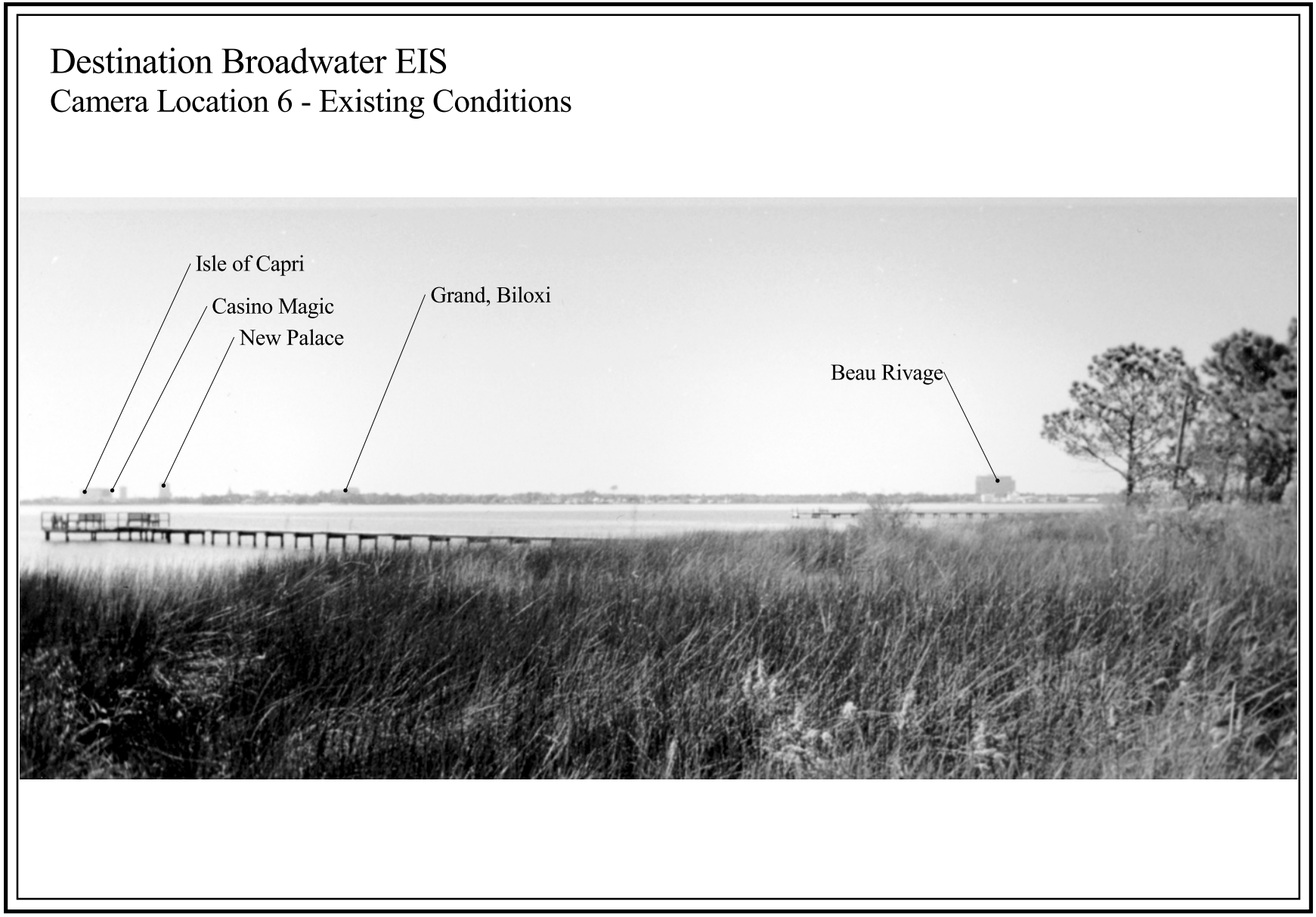

Figure 4.14-18: Existing conditions looking south southwest (refer to camera location 6 on Figure 4.14-1)

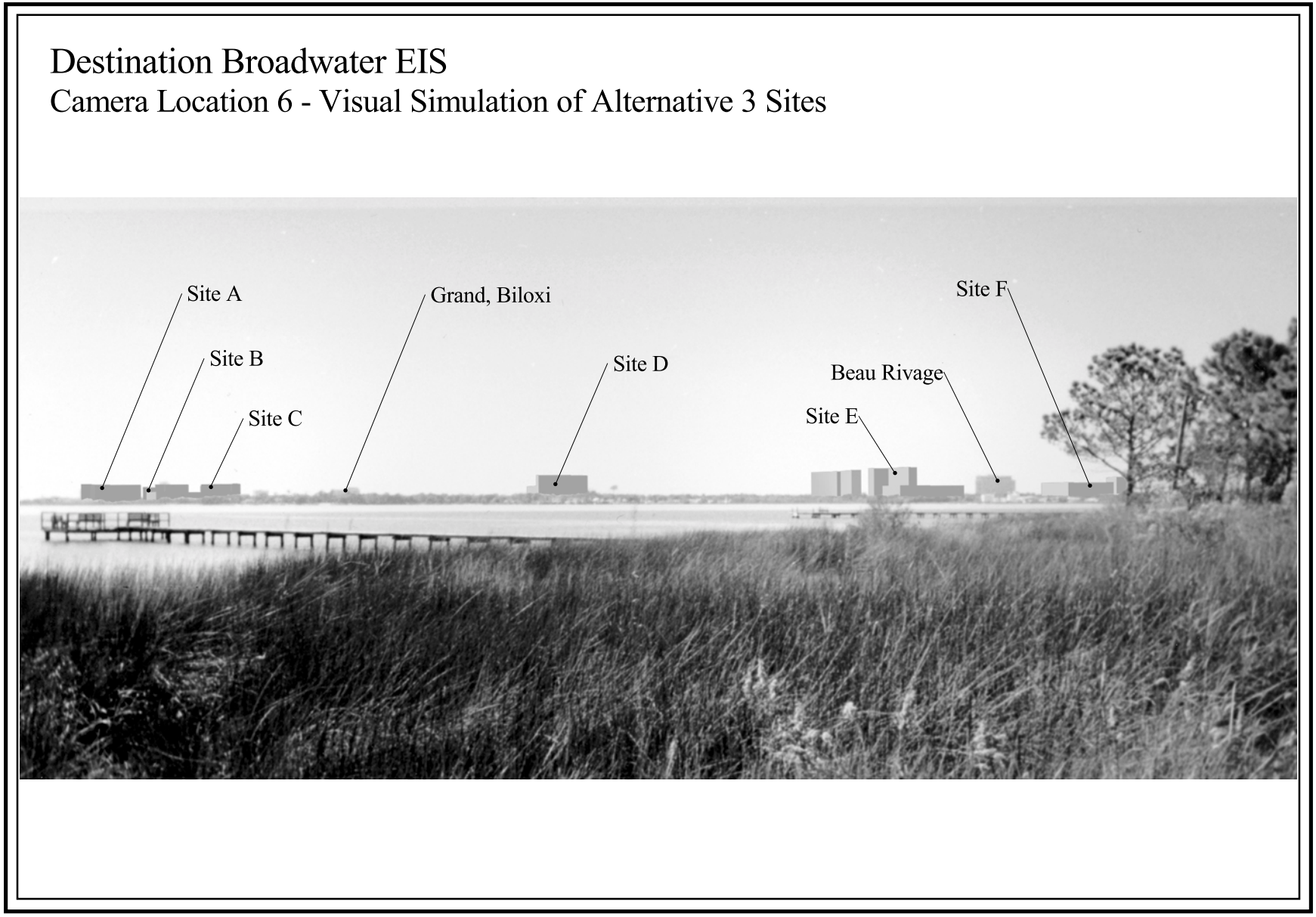

Figure 4.14-19: Visual simulation of Alternative 3 looking south southwest (refer to camera location 6 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 7 - Existing Conditions

Figure 4.14-20: Existing conditions looking south (refer to camera location 7 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 7 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 3 Sites

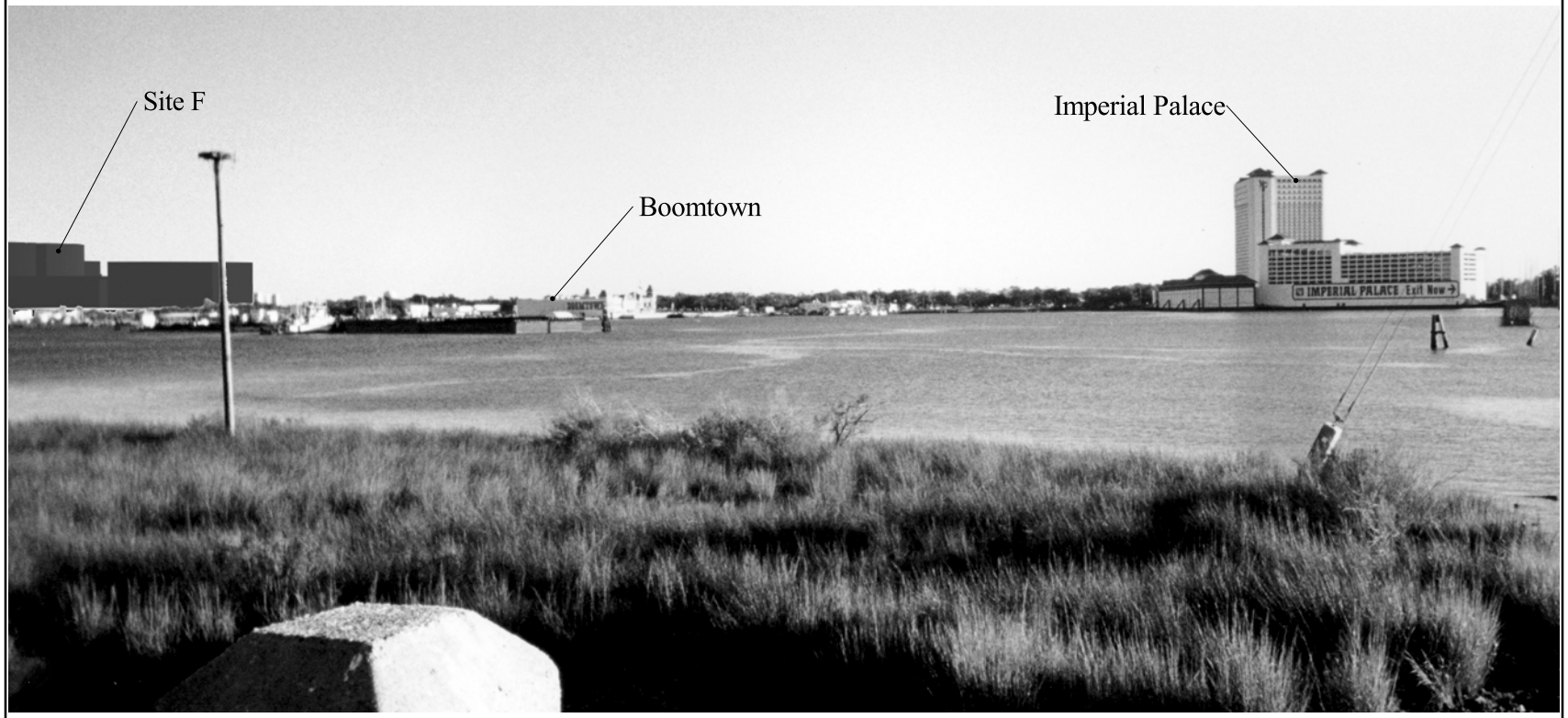

Figure 4.14-21: Visual simulation of Alternative 3 looking south (refer to camera location 7 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS
Camera Location 8 - Existing Conditions

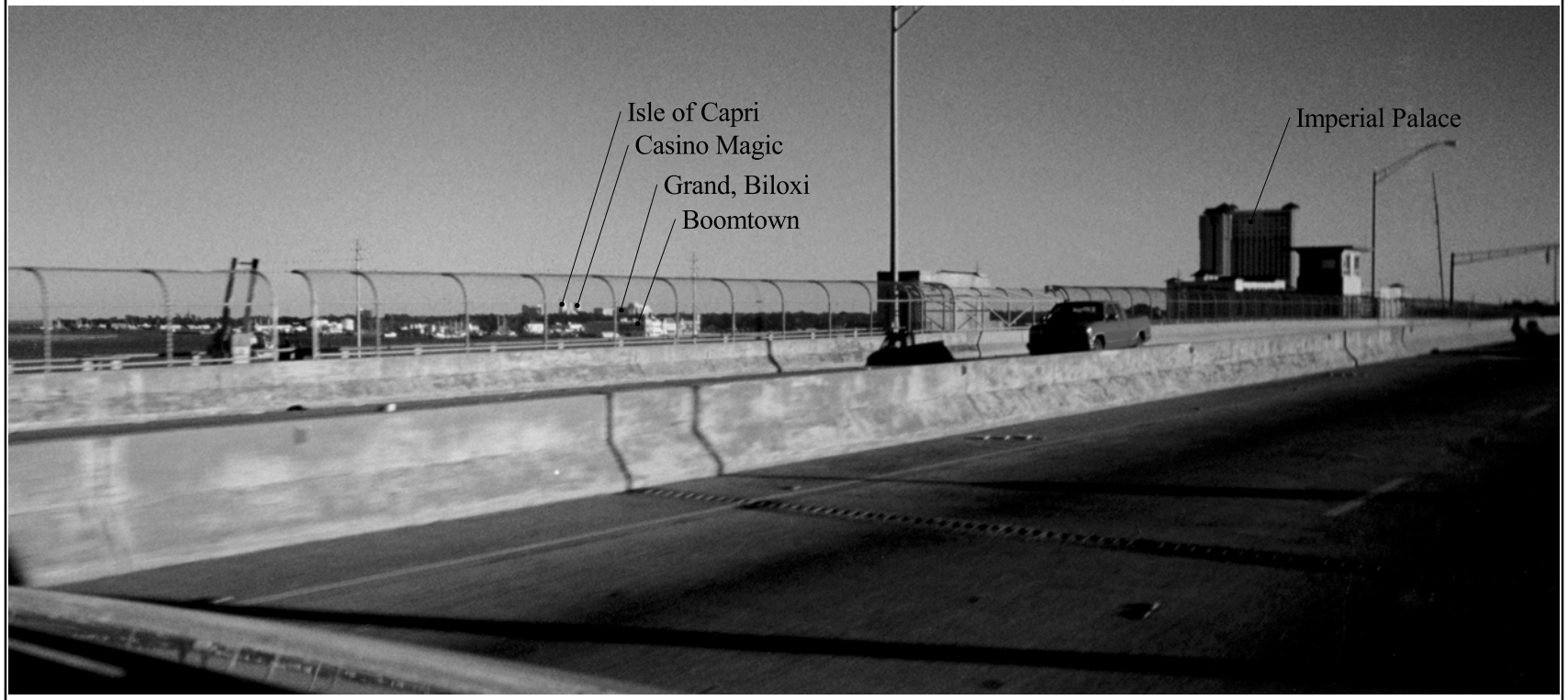

Figure 4.14-22: Existing conditions looking southeast (refer to camera location 8 on Figure 4.14-1)

Destination Broadwater EIS

Camera Location 8 - Visual Simulation of Alternative 3 Sites

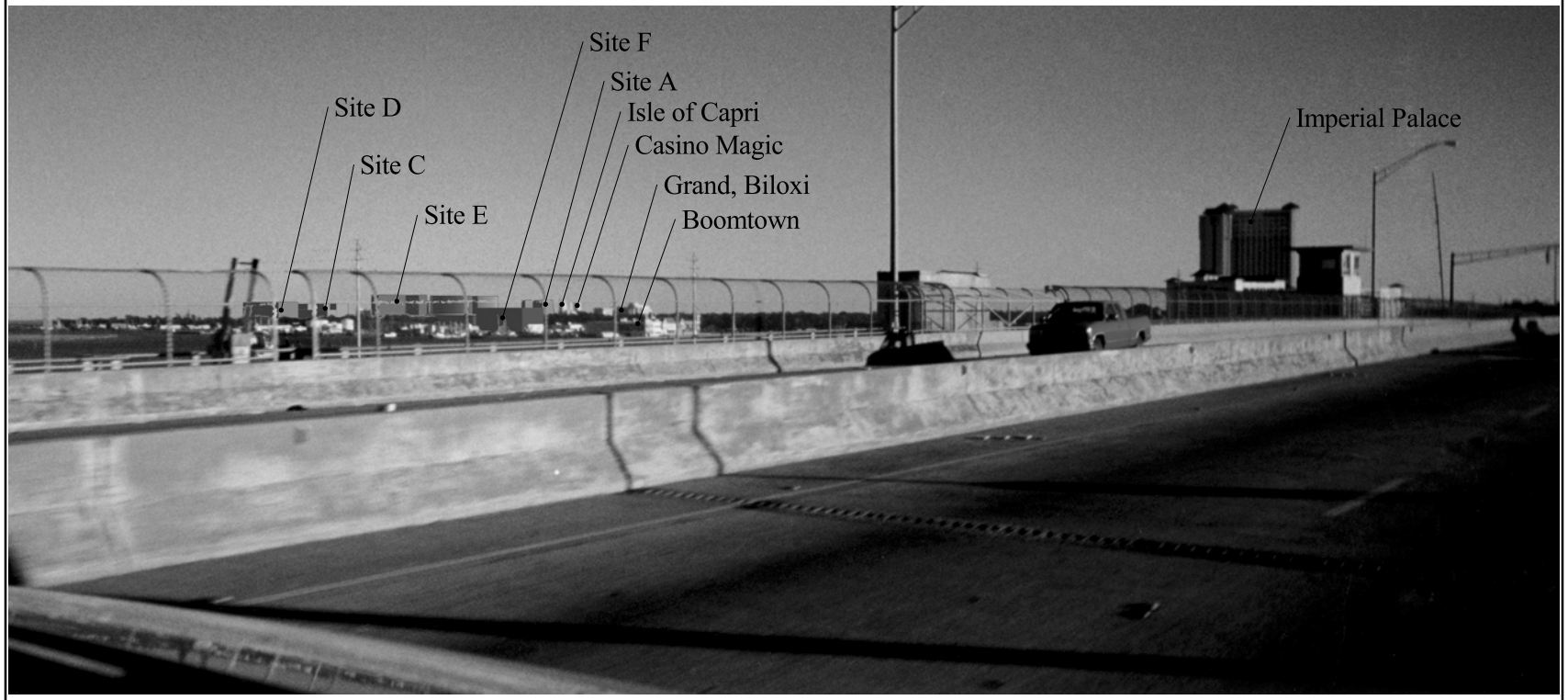

Figure 4.14-23: Visual simulation of Alternative 3 looking southeast (refer to camera location 8 on Figure 4.14-1)